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Larionescu, Maria

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Maria Larionescu

Sociology – Romania

Discussant: Mihai Dinu Gheorghiu

1. Analysis of the pre-1989 situation

The establishment of communism in Romania, as in other Eastern and Central European countries, coincided with a break in sociology's career as a didactic discipline and science with a critical vocation. The marginalization of this discipline came in waves of rejection of varying intensity, depending on factors of the domestic and foreign context.

The spectrum of Marxism-Leninism

In the 1950s and early 1960s, sociology experienced what is called its and other socio-human sciences' "ancillization" toward the Marxist-Leninist ideology, that is, their systematic control and manipulation by the communist party-state. Historical materialism, conceived as a Russian dogmatic and simplified variant of Marxism, took the place of sociological analysis. The general process of relaxation peaked in the mid-1960s with the re-institutionalization of sociology as both a teaching and a research discipline, of course under the tutelage of Marxism-Leninism. Political factors intruded on sociology's revival, making it generally "captive", but the post-war evolution of the discipline shows a few *paradoxical* aspects due to several factors: pre-war traditions, the existence of a group of sociologists despite the administrative ban and incarceration of reputed sociologists, the impact of Western theories, and, last but not least, the impact of empirical sociological research.

Pre-war traditions

The "career" of Romanian sociology began in the mid-19th century and was closely tied to the discourse of modernity in Romanian culture and society. The historical-comparative analysis of Romanian sociology through a century of its existence (1848-1948) reveals four ideal types of modernity: liberal rationalist representation, "organized or state modernity", the representation of modernity established on the specificity of cultural identity, and the historical materialist representation.

The second fundamental component of Romanian sociological traditions was classical theoretical sociology, or "desk sociology", developed by professionals starting in the last decade of the 19th century and continuing in the first half of the 20th century. Dimitrie Gusti founded the first modern sociological school in Romania, the Sociological School of Bucharest. The picture of Romanian sociology in that period reveals a simultaneous European synchronism with substantial contributions (Ilie Bădescu).

The existence of rich traditions in the discipline and of a large body of professional sociologists could not pass without leaving traces, even after the discipline was officially banned in 1948. A body of professional sociologists still went on practicing sociology, masked behind other disciplines (political economy, statistics, social hygiene, ethnology, and anthropology), and there were institutions such as the General Directorate for Statistics, the Institute of Hygiene, and the Institute for Economic Research. The "moral and institutional rehabilitation" of the discipline in the mid-60s was also a "nationalization of a cultural capital and re-establishment of an internal genealogy" (Gheorghiu, 1987:80). Henri H. Stahl, a reputed survivor of the Bucharest Monograph School, played a distinct role in the revitalization of sociology.

The impact of Western theories

The impact of Western theories increased substantially with the ideological thaw and with the re-institutionalization of sociology in 1965. In the long term, we may note the effect of “reformist sociology”, which started to animate the sociologists interested in applying Western ideas and theories with the view of perfecting the socialist system. The fundamental Marxist orientation of the reformist sociologists gave them the required security to elaborate the research projects. Marxist “cover” was indispensable to any scientific manifestation within the system.

The combination of Western theories with historic materialism yielded unpredictable effects, including several theoretical incongruities, ambiguities, the empiricism of many investigations, puerile practices of opinion surveys, and the search for reasons legitimating theses in party documents.

Oppositional activities

There was no active sociological dissidence displayed within the communist system that signified an official and effective break from Marxist ideology. We may, nevertheless, identify a few defensive strategies that sociologists developed in their surveys: a) the stratagem of the *local* character of the surveys allowed the researchers to reveal social problems and various malfunctions, such as the “decrease in standards” in organizations, self-perpetuating bodies within the structures of socialist democracy, etc., without pretending to generalize them to the whole socialist system; b) the *adaptation and specification of concepts and theories* as “intended distortion” to avoid the defensive reaction of the system. Thus, the American sociological movement on the *social development* of organizations became the *human development* of socialist enterprises, in the project elaborated by Cătălin Zamfir, Ioan Mărginean, Septimiu Chelcea, Mielu Zlate, and Ștefan Ștefănescu, in which the authors used the methodology of diagnosis and assessment of social actors (SEDA) developed at Ann Arbor University, Michigan; c) the uses of special modes of communication reserved to writers to build “unorthodox” scientific constructions. For example, the comprehensive theory on Romanian culture focused on the stage of literature; the book as an object, symbol, and purpose; game theory and practice; and the socio-history of culture (Gheorghiu, 1987). Other ways of escaping the vigilance of censorship were to take refuge in history, methodological sophistication, or mimicry of ideological discourse; d) some authors (Gheorghiu, 2002) mention an alternative sociology outside the system, such as Pavel Câmpeanu’s work (Campeanu, 1994), which was distributed as samizdat.

2. Redefinition of the discipline since 1990

The 1989 revolution awakened in sociologists a huge horizon of expectations and signified a mixture of hope for the rehabilitation of the science and of illusions about the decisive contribution sociology could make to the construction of a market-oriented democratic society.

Change of paradigms

The most significant and radical change in the discipline’s physiognomy since 1989 was the “overnight” break with Marxism-Leninism. This break was so sudden and visible that we can say that the disappearance of the Ceaușescu regime coincided with the fall of the official paradigm, by general consensus, without displayed resistance or attempts to defend the former official doctrine. Rejection was so definite that not even after 10 years has there been any significant return to Marxism.

The formal absence of the Marxist perspective from the sociology of the past decade does not mean it has completely disappeared. Informally, the Marxist perspective is still present in the analysis of social phenomena, especially in combination with other theories, or leading to the

development of other theories (see below such concepts as “survival society”, “parasitic capitalism”, etc.), or to a preference for certain areas of study (poverty, social policies, etc.).

Though not completely omitted, the Marxist paradigm is relativized; in particular, recently published textbooks treat it as one orientation among others. Most authors avoid mentioning Marxism altogether. Particularly during the early years of transition, the pressing need for a theoretical alternative to Marxism was met, in many cases, by a *theoretical syncretism*, which proved rather the variety of the sources available for documentation than a personal or assumed theoretical option.

Change of elites

The 1989 revolution caught the discipline in a marginalized position; its role in higher education was limited and under ideologically surveillance. One of the first measures the new regime took – at the initiative of the sociologists still working at institutes of higher education in Bucharest and in the country’s main university centers – was to reinstate sociology as a subject of higher education (in association with other socio-humanistic disciplines: psychology, pedagogy, social work, history, and philosophy). The decision-making structures of sociological education and sociological research consist mainly of teaching staff and researchers formed during the 1970s to 1980s, with documentation periods spent in Western countries and professional activity legitimized by the scientific community. The new elite also includes new sociologists accredited after 1989.

New institutional structures

The reconstruction of sociology meant not only the formation of a scientific elite, but also an unprecedented expansion of sociological institutions. Older institutions of academic research, such as the Institute of Sociology of the Romanian Academy, in Bucharest, the local branches of the Romanian Academy – Institutes of Social and Human Research from Cluj-Napoca, Iași, Timișoara, Sibiu, Tg. Mureș, and Craiova, and the Studies and Research Center in the Problems of the Young (C.S.C.P.T.) in Bucharest have consolidated their position. And new educational, research, and commercial structures in sociology have been added.

Rehabilitation, repatriation, new departures

Once the discipline was accepted and institutionalized, the rehabilitation of the “outlaws” who had left the country legally or illegally before 1989 was a mere formality. Romanian sociologists reputed abroad but censored in socialist Romania, such as Mihail Cernea (a senior adviser to the World Bank), Vladimir Tismăneanu, Vladimir Krasnaselski, Paul Stahl, and others, were rehabilitated. Some sociologists living in Western countries returned to live in Romania, like Paul Stahl; others paid frequent visits to the country after 1989, resuming their journalistic activity in Romania, like Vladimir Tismăneanu.

Parallel to rehabilitation and the permanent or temporary return of Romanian sociologists residing in Western countries before 1989, in an inverse process, many young Romanian sociologists, students, and graduates left for the West, mainly to study. Many of them continue their university training toward a master’s or doctorate in sociology at American and European universities.

3. Core theoretical and methodological orientations

Revival and adaptation of major pre-war traditions

The discourse of capitalist modernization of Romanian society, with its abundant polemics during the pre-war period, was updated after the break from communism.

Theory of the soul latency

Ilie Bădescu defined latency as soul energy or power stored in human nature, which “spreads everywhere”, forming a “bottomless store of virtualities, a kind of proto-virtues and foreboding”. Shared by a small group of disciples, this spiritualist paradigm of latency offered a means of understanding and explaining modern history in terms of the “malady of modernity”, of the national identity as a “substrate of the people through the theory of diffused soul latency” (Bădescu, 1997:129). The theory of latency is a qualitative and historical strategy, whose analysis emphasizes the coherence of the system, its manner of functioning, and the aims of the social agents (communist, national, oligarchic, and post-communist political elite).

“Transition as premises of postmodernity”

Lazăr Vlăsceanu observes a lag between formal and informal changes. The rhythm of change in formal institutions promoted by laws and normative regulations was faster than that of informal institutions, which are mainly “moral and social” and which have a profound cultural inertia (path-dependence, North).

Unlike the organicist theory, Lazăr Vlăsceanu does not see a solution in the appeal to the immutable Romanian soul, but rather in a postmodern development based on “constantly reinvented” cultural traditions (Vlăsceanu 2001: 133, 134).

The Bucharest Monograph School

After 1989, some integral village monographs were carried out in accordance with the Gustian interdisciplinary paradigm, many of whose sociological principles and methods were recovered: the theoretical foundation of empirical surveys, sociologic integralism, direct and active observation, interdisciplinary cooperation in the survey of local and zonal communities, and connection between sociology and politics. In 2001, the Romanian Social Institute was refounded on the lines Gusti established in 1921 as a public forum for research and debates on the fundamental problems of the country.

Recapturing the past

These are two large projects of analysis and recapture of Romanian sociological traditions: rehabilitation of the values repressed by the communist regime and the sociology of Romanian sociology. Frequent distortions in this approach include trends to stress the absolute originality of Romanian contributions and to underestimate the connections between national and Western sociology. There are extremely rare references to sociology from Central and other Eastern European countries.

New approaches

After 1989, Romania, like the other former socialist countries, opened up to a multitude of theoretical ideas about and practices of development under the new conditions of transition, social problems, the definition of ethnic identity, the genesis of civil society, institutional construction, etc. A substantial amount of research was dedicated to new general and specific theoretical approaches in sociology.

Enlarged causal analysis

The novelty of the solution proposed by Cătălin Zamfir is the insertion of a functional explanatory mechanism into the causal design, resulting in a “causal design detailed functionally” (Cosima Rughiniş). The intellectual challenges produced by this paradigm led to a more complex view of the social system that “must be regarded as being in a state of oscillation between system and oversystem” (Zamfir, 1999:130).

Theory of limited, individual, and collective human rationality

According to this theory, a behavior must be understood in terms of the interests it defends, the knowledge supporting it, and the constraints acting on it. This theory was tested in comprehensive studies of poverty and impoverishment, social polarization, marginalized categories, and social policies (Zamfir, 1990, 1999; Zamfir, 1995, 1999; Zamfir and Zamfir, 1993, 1995, 2000).

Theory of the "Social Space of Transition"

Elaborating an original synthesis between the phenomenological approach, the recent debates on the concept of social capital (Putnam, Bourdieu, Becker), and an older Romanian orientation of social mechanics (Spiru Haret), Dumitru Sandu formulated an enticing paradigm with the concept of "social space of transition" as central pivot. The "social space" is defined by the manner in which individual (education, health, income, wealth) and community (welfare of the community or area where the social actors reside) resources influence the actions, attitudes, and values of individuals. The paradigm "social space of transition" was tested in surveys on domestic migration, entrepreneurship, and agricultural households (Sandu, 1996, 1999).

The general perspective on social rationality

Sorin Rădulescu asserts that the most satisfactory model is that of "Homo Sociologicus", which synthesizes the two revealing images of the man (tied to the ideas of Ralf Dahrendorf): "rational" man, "included and subdued by predictable social roles", and "irrational" man, who acts unpredictably. This approach was used in research on deviance, social pathology, domestic violence, and some marginal groups (transsexuals). In a different direction, the study of Romanian and Western classical and contemporary theories led Ion Ungureanu to develop the constitutive problem of contemporary sociology as an expression of rationality and social action (Rădulescu, 1994; Ungureanu, 1990).

The specific theoretical answers of the sociologists to the challenges of post-communist transition show a wide range of concepts and *middle range theories*. Here are examples of some thematic areas.

Theories on Romanian socialism

Very few Romanian sociologists devoted their efforts to the analysis of the communist regime in Romania. Foreign authors like Katherine Verdery or David Kideckel elaborated several papers on socialist Romanian society.

Public policies in communism

The analysis emphasizes the study of individual as rational actors; the monitoring of direct and deleterious effects of the ideology on policy and of policy on the situation of individuals; observation of contradictory evolutions in the social system (effects of the limited rationality of the state); identification of system failures, particularly those related to the official ideology; and observation of the incoherence of social policies, of the coexistence of positive and deleterious results (Zamfir, 1999; Zamfir and Zamfir, 1995).

Ethnic identity and the penury economy in communism

The roles of ethnicity and the border in the penury economy (János Kornai) are underlined (Chelcea and Lățeș, 2000).

The line for food as a fundamental social institution

Pavel Câmpeanu conducts the qualitative, ethno-methodological analysis of the structure of interactions in the line (queue): the functional analysis of the line as an element of the socialist social system. The functions of the line are: to reduce demand to the level of supply, to dissolve the grown social hierarchy; and to make people overly concerned with securing their food, leaving no time for disputes over power. The study analyzes primarily the coherence of the system (the manner in which the line is an integrating and functional institution in socialism) and the cynicism of the system (how official ideology is clearly contradicted by reality) (Câmpeanu, 1994).

Theories on underdevelopment

"Survival society"

The paper by Vladimir Pasti, Mihaela Miroiu, and Cornel Codiță is an articulate assembly of explanatory ideas, concepts of conflict, and Marxist theories about the mechanisms generating postcommunist underdevelopment and about overcoming underdevelopment. "The post-totalitarian survival society is regarded as an unintended consequence of institution building after 1989." (Larionescu and Sandu, 2001: 142) These authors underline the dysfunction of the process

of institutional construction, paying less attention to the resources of the institutions that make them instruments of enabling (Pasti; Miroiu and Codiță, 1997).

Theories on poverty, social exclusion and social policy

Poverty is viewed as a fundamental challenge to both society and sociology. Three factors have been identified as responsible for the devastating erosion of the standard of living: the decrease in purchasing power of most incomes; the rapid increase of income differentiation; decreasing social transfers; and lower social protection (Zamfir, 1995; 1999; 2000; Zamfir and Zamfir, 1995; Zamfir and Preda, 2000; Teșliuc; Pop and Teșliuc, 2001).

Middle range theories on cultural heritage and development

M. Cernea – the former Senior Social Adviser for Social Policy of the World Bank and currently Consultant Social Adviser in the Middle East North Africa Region of the World Bank – generated a change in development thinking. He formulated a new theoretical approach in development projects focused on cultural heritage, “putting people first”. The changes in development thinking the author proposes show that the “cultural sector contributes to effective economic growth rather than just consuming budgetary resources” (Cernea, 2001: 3-4; 1991; 2000, 2001).

Risks and reconstruction policies

Michael Cernea and McDowell formulate the Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction (IRR) model for resettling displaced populations, based on studies on development, social change, population resettlement, grassroots organizations, and participation (2000). A brief presentation of this model is included in *The Challenge of Transition in Romanian Society and Sociology* (Larionescu and Sandu, 2001). Cernea’s contributions to development thinking have expanded the range of entry points for social scientific knowledge in the World Bank’s projects and have promoted “a more encompassing development paradigm” that “places the inducement of economic growth within the *social* context” (ibid. 173-174).

Theories of ethnicity and nationalism

The reconstruction of ethnic and national identity after decades of domination by the communist ideology, which generated prejudices and stereotypes with a strong ideological load, came to the attention of sociologists, anthropologists, historians, and psychologists. A defining characteristic of the major sociological projects focusing on ethnic identity is that they give up the substantialist position of mass psychology embraced by older sociological traditions, which considered identity to be primordial data.

Ethnicity as collective inhabiting

Dorel Abraham, Septimiu Chelcea, and Ilie Bădescu specify their constructivist approach in terms of ethnomorphology, treating cohabitation as a phenomenon of ethnic interaction, in contrast to the old clichés of ethnic monads. Backed by such analytical instruments as Bogardus’ scale of social distance and Tajfel’s theory of social comparison, the authors have delineated four different patterns of cohabiting specific to the various cultural areas of Romania: cosmopolite, intercultural, cantonal, and ethnocentric (1995).

A “subjective” model of ethnicity centered on the exposure to difference

Alina Mungiu-Pippidi reached the conclusion that Tajfel’s theory of the minimal group and the comparative-historical approach is essential to understand and explain ethnic identity. The theory of the minimal group reveals the trend of groups to maximize the differences between them (Mungiu-Pippidi, 1999). The author’s “subjective” perspective on ethnic conflict is different from the approach to the same subject by Abraham, Chelcea, and Bădescu. The latter contested the legitimacy of the concept of ethnic conflict in provinces with ethnic heterogeneity (Transylvania, Banat, Dobrogea), asserting that the conflict has social (ownership, interpersonal relations) and not ethnic causes. But Alina Mungiu-Pippidi says sources of conflict may be found in its perception by significant ethnic groups in their rivalry to reach certain objectives.

Narrative identity

The survey of the process of the active reconstruction of identity borders within Romania's multiethnic community involved a combination of symbolic interactionism, hermeneutics, and thick description. What resulted was a construction of the "narrative identity" as a "weave of told stories". The "voices" listened and analyzed in the text certify the existence of disregarded social categories (spoiled identity) as well as the heterogeneity within the category of "Romanian", contradicting the theses based on the cultural homogeneity of the nation and of local histories (Chelcea and Lăteș, 2000). Other approaches of ethnicity are *substantialist* in essence (Cobianu-Băcanu, 1998) and emphasize the differences between ethnic groups.

Theories on Management and Organizations

In the last decade, changes in management practices and constraints occurred simultaneously with growing criticism of developmentalist perspectives and transfer projects. Organizational culture became the keyword in the design of endogenous projects, aiming to achieve a reflective modernization and not merely to imitate an allegedly unique occidental model (Hoffman, 2000; Vlăsceanu, 1993, 1996, 1999; Mereuță, Pop; Vlaicu and Pop, 1998).

Theories of communication and electoral processes

Statistically processing the empirical data of the elections in Romania in the 1990s, sociologists formulated generalizations supporting one another, but also displaying differences that intrigue and stimulate new research. For instance, significant are conclusions on "minimal democracy" (Matei Dogan) as a historical variant of "showcase democracy" (Pasti; Miroiu and Codiță, 1997:129-164), on "vulnerable democracy" (Vlăsceanu and Miroiu, 2001:51), on the "permanent electoral campaign" (Mungiu), and on the "failure of democracy" in Romania (Bulai, 1999:258).

The symbolic construction of the electoral field

One of the first groups in Romania to specialize in a multidisciplinary sociology of communication took an innovating approach by "assessing the role of the mass media as actor in a multidimensional and interactive public space of social actors; measuring audition rates and media credibility by an assembly of interconnected indicators (beyond the formula of brief rating surveys); organizing specific sociological surveys to test classical paradigms and hypotheses on the influence, functions, and effects of the mass media." (Drăgan et al., 1998:15; Beciu, 2000)

Theories on corruption and deviance

Dan Banciu and Sorin Rădulescu highlight the issue using concepts of anomie, social disorganization, organizational deviance, legal fetishism, and the labeling process. They propose a multidimensional definition of corruption, which is understood as a "functional substitute for a reform that was not taken to its end, not just a mere excrescence" (1994: 26, 27, 29, compare also Rădulescu; Banciu and Teodorescu, 2001; Banciu and Rădulescu, 1994).

New East-West asymmetries

The above sketch of the major theoretical orientations revealed the *absence of Marxism* as a paradigm in contemporary Romanian sociology. Another difference between East and West lies in the asymmetry of sociological approaches to the *emancipation of some minorities* (women, children); Romanian sociology takes an academic approach and nothing is heard from radical sociological currents (feminism, protest movements against ethnic, racial, or sexual discrimination), with a few noteworthy exceptions. Some examples are conclusive.

The projects of the sociological investigation of *gender* and the *family* are generally middle range *academic* theories based on functionalist, interactionist-symbolic presuppositions of social action. (Mihăilescu, 1999; Stănculescu, 1997, 1998; Voinea, 1996; Iluț, 1995; Zamfir and Zamfir, 2000). *Feminist sociology* (Grunberg, Miroiu, 1997a, 1997b, etc.), in its early days in Romania hovering around the revue "Analyses", displayed a more radical attitude on the status of women.

Feminist studies critically and militantly assess various forms of gender discrimination (economic, politic, cultural) and of physical and symbolic violence against women.

Another asymmetry with the West lies in *the deficit of internal critique* in Romania's sociological community. The domestic scientific practice of the invisible college is intermittent and unsystematic. Opinion on significant papers is seldom displayed. That sociologists publish refereed papers in Western journals also demonstrates an East-West asymmetry: the *insufficient institutionalization* of the discipline in Romania.

Quantitative vs. qualitative empirical research approaches

The quantitative approach used by most surveys includes a wide range of methods and techniques, more or less sophisticated: sociological survey, opinion survey, sampling, frequency distribution analysis, data processing, scaling, statistical significance analysis, cluster analysis, regression analysis, and factorial analyses. Quantitative empirical surveys are frequent mainly in the areas of life quality, policy, and elections.

The main aspects of the qualitative survey have been mentioned in the studies devoted to this field: thick description (Geertz), biography, case studies, interpretive approaches, grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss), participatory observation, individual interviews, focus-group interviews, and "theoretical sampling". Following pre-war sociological traditions, the studies of the 1990s showed a particular force of assertion of and trust in the qualitative approach, mainly in the symbolic areas of culture, ethnic identity, political community, community development, education, family, human resource management, etc. Most qualitative studies are descriptive, with a few noteworthy exceptions.

Considering the expansion of qualitative surveys after 1989, we have reason to believe they will be more accepted in the future. Whether they used preponderantly quantitative or qualitative strategies, most researchers displayed a propensity to contextualization, but sometimes ignoring the influences and contacts between ideas and cultures led to exaggeratedly "original" conclusions.

4. Thematic orientation and funding

Sociology's thematic options in the 1990s reflected the challenges of transition, on the one hand, and the epistemological requirements of the internal reconstruction of the discipline, on the other. Most major sociological projects analyze Romanian society using empirical references.

Transition as a major object of study

Although most of the papers analyzing Romanian society and/or its segments refer to the process of transition, post-communist sociology cannot be simply equated with the sociology of transition, not even in the case of volumes whose titles refer to the sociology of transition. Many researchers define transition as a process of multidimensional change: the process of post-communist underdevelopment; the special case of remodernization through the reorganization of social, human, material, and symbolic capital; and transition as premises of postmodernity. Other authors approach transition as a complex of interconnected processes and phenomena: a) a process of massive and brutal impoverishment; an explosion of aspirations concomitant with the crash of possibilities; b) a social polarization arising from the low level of social services for disfavored categories; c) a moral crisis, meaning: the general perception that success is obtained through corruption and connections; disappointment; distrust in state institutions; and a crisis of social solidarity; and d) the lack of a coherent strategy on the political level; ad hoc political decisions.

Within the scope of this study, I could not consider all Romanian sociologists and their works. Some sociologists not included in the present study have taught sociology on various educational levels, disseminating sociological findings to a broader audience, etc.

Choice of themes

Transition permitted researchers to choose their own themes of study and abandoned the old practice of deriving themes from party documents. The state academic institutes have relative autonomy; they are controlled by the Romanian Academy through assessment and through funding from the budget. The institutes choose themes by internal negotiation between the collectives of researchers and the institution's Scientific Council. Formally, state institutions have full autonomy in choosing research themes; but actually they must consider the theme collectives' capacity to meet quality parameters and ensure that the assessment by the Academy's experts is as favorable as possible, thus winning proper financing. The commercial institutions select their themes according to the requirements of the beneficiaries.

The range of providers of research grants for different themes has recently expanded and now includes the Ministry of Education and Research, the Romanian Academy, the Ministry of Labor and Social Solidarity, the Ministry of Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Culture and Cults, the National Council for the University Scientific Research, the National Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights, the World Bank, the Open Society Foundation, the New Europe College, etc. Specialized research and development programs educating and supporting small and mid-size enterprises have a fundamental role in the expansion and selection of research themes by competition – Phare, Tempus, and Socrates, financed in common by international bodies (the EU, the World Bank, etc.) and the Romanian state.

The institutions and researchers are developing a market in sociological research. Some authors are drawing attention to the risk that sociology will become “auxiliary to the marketing and management modes” (Gheorghiu, 2002).

The impact of thematic orientations on institutional structures

Thematic orientation determines the profile and structure of any institute of sociological research. The thematic orientation's strongest and most visible impact on the research units was displayed in the research and education institutions established after 1989, which had deliberately elaborated flexible structures, readily adaptable to the thematic profile. A similar situation is observed in commercial sociological institutions, where the organizational diagram is subordinated to orders received from customers.

The sociological institutions established before 1989 underwent a process of adaptation to the new thematic requirements by reorienting existing teams and creating new teams. As the competition for research grants intensifies, the flexibility of organizational structures is expected to increase as a survival strategy and as a means of preserving the research units' status.

Private vs. public funding

A novel element of financing sociological research in the 1990s was the appearance and continuous increase of private funding. Funding from the budget ensured the survival of the state institutes, but the continuous trend is to cut the budget. There is a clear perception of the limits of budgetary resources and that, in periods of crisis, budget funding cannot cover the discipline's increasing needs. Hence the trend for research units and their research and teaching staff to diversify funding resources by identifying new opportunities.

The dynamics of research funds for socio-human sciences increased in the transition period (Table 1). The relative decrease of expenditure in 1999 may have been conjectural. The competition among research units and among individual researchers to win grants is becoming general; institutions and individuals are re-stratifying in accordance with scientific and interpersonal competence, the visibility of performance, prestige, and the importance of the themes addressed and of their beneficiaries.

5. Public space and academic debates

The position of sociology in the public space oscillates between axiological neutrality and sociologists' involvement as "reflection and action nuclei in the area of social norms and values" (Ioan Mihăilescu, 2001: 75).

Debated themes, problems, methods

Sociologists were involved in public debates on major themes and problems of transition. Disseminated by the mass media, symposia, and public conferences, the conclusions of sociological surveys approached the problem of transition in terms of: a) expected and failed intentions and effects of the reforms in the economy, politics, administration, health care, education, culture, the army, etc.; b) the population's opinions of and attitudes and behavior toward these reforms.

The methods debated publicly were public opinion surveys, sampling, questionnaires (used mainly in election surveys), political sociology surveys, communication, and mass media surveys. Sociologists do not perceive their dialogue with civil society, economic agents, political actors, and administrators as satisfactory. The community of sociologists has a persistent feeling of frustration about its involvement in debates on major problems of Romanian society in transition. A recent (2001) initiative of the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work at Bucharest University, the Association of Romanian Sociologists, and the Institute for Quality of Life seeks to establish a new review, "Social Romania", whose aim would be to maintain a constant dialogue with civil society, economic agents, political factors, and managers at the central and local level.

Principal academic journals

- *Romanian Sociology*, published by the Romanian Association of Sociology, 1990
- the *Romanian Journal of Sociology*, published by the Institute of Sociology at the Romanian Academy, 1990
- the *Social Research Review*, published jointly by the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work at Bucharest University, the Romanian Association of Sociology, and the Institute for Quality of Life, 1990
- the *Romanian Journal of Sociology*, published jointly by the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work at Bucharest University, the Romanian Association of Sociology, 1972
- the *Journal of Quality of Life Research*, published by the Institute for Quality of Life at the Romanian Academy, 1990
- *Studia Babeş-Bolyai University*, Series of Sociology, published by the Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, 1970
- the *Journal of Social Theory*, published by the Institute of Social Theory at the Romanian Academy, 1997
- *Revue Roumaine de Theorie Sociale*, published by the Institute of Social Theory at the Romanian Academy, 1998

These academic journals face severe material difficulties, so they are often irregularly published. Some publishers are supported by public bodies (the National Council for University Scientific Research, etc.) or private organizations (the Open Society Foundation) to publish the journals. But financial uncertainty disturbs the regular publishing of academic journals of sociology.

New manuals. Databases

The renewal and diversification of the sociology curriculum in state and private education was reflected in the elaboration of new manuals of general sociology and its branches. Besides the "classical" manuals of general sociology and of its branches, several new manuals appeared, with special themes associated with transition (Mărgineanu, 1994, 2000; Ştefănescu, 1999; Neculau, Ferreol, 1999).

During the decade of transition, field institutes and other bodies interested in sociological information developed databases. Databases are built around areas of interest, for example on: a) the socio-demography of Transylvanian localities (Babeş-Bolyai University, Department of Sociology, Cluj-Napoca); b) social change analysis and social reform in Romanian society; social problems diagnosis, social and demographic structures; community and regional development; social policy and probation; social indicators and quality of life; social communication; social problems of disabled people; organizational and institutional analysis; social marginalization and exclusion; cultural anthropology (University of Bucharest Department of Sociology and Social Work); c) population income and expenditure; social policies; the village during transition to the market economy (Institute for Quality of Life, Bucharest); d) social communities and identities during transition, the actors of social change during transition; encyclopedia of Romanian sociology (the Institute of Sociology at the Romanian Academy, Bucharest); e) demographic structure of the Romanian population (Center of Demographic Research of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest); f) and marketing, opinion surveys on economic, socio-political problems; election studies, mass media rating, etc. (commercial sociological institutes).

The barometer of public opinion (BOP) and the self-reflectiveness of public opinion. In 1994, the Open Society Foundation started the series of BOP surveys. There have meanwhile been 22 of these systematic reports, including a gender barometer in 2000. Access to BOP data is free (address: www.osf.ro). Although each survey has a given theme and while new themes concerning the European integration have been addressed since 1997, all surveys had a thematic structure designed to provide a dynamic perspective on Romanian society.

6. Views on further development

The future development of Romanian sociology is closely connected to East-West dialogue, regional cooperation in sociology, and European integration. A spectacular effect of the downfall of the communist regime was the enhancement of bilateral and multilateral, informal and project-based international cooperation. Here are just a few significant examples of international cooperation in sociology:

The French-Romanian colloquium on Media, Communication, and New Technologies (1991-2001). The eight meetings so far have been held in Bucharest. Part of the debates was published in France (Drăgan *et al*, 1998). A brief presentation may be found in Larionescu, Sandu (2001:148-149).

Vision of Europe in Romanian Young People's Perception, Dan Banciu, Ilut Petre, 2000-2001, Institute of Sociology at the Romanian Academy, Bucharest. Project partners: Foundation Minoritas, Research Institute on Ethnic Minorities, Budapest; Institut National de la Jeunesse et de l'Education Populaire, Paris. The main concerns of this project are civic values and attitudes in young people; attitudes and mentalities towards globalization, poverty, conflicts, chauvinism, and tolerance for difference; youth and politics; ethnic identity and alterity; normativity and social order; youth and Europe; assessment, self-assessment, projections, etc.

Performance and democracy in local administrations, 2001-2002, L. Pop, Department of Sociology and Social Work. Participants: Romania, Lithuania, Hungary, and Poland. Funding: Open Society Institute (LGI-Local Government Initiative).

The impact of accession

Romania's accession to the European Union stimulated sociological research and education by expanding reflection on new themes such as: challenges and responses to globalization; globalization and cultural identities; exposure to difference; transition and postmodernity; national and regional communities; social polarization and exclusion from the perspective of European integration, etc.

The impact of research in the public sphere

Sociologists have succeeded in bringing back to objective, nonpartisan scientific research several highly ideological themes: the quality of life, the erosion of the standard of living, polarization and the social exclusion of disfavored groups and categories, corruption, crime, etc., offering at the same time a consistent documentary basis for reform options.

Sociological studies have expanded public knowledge on social life by identifying certain “grounded reasons” (in agreement with the “bonnes raisons” – Boudon), which make sense of behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs otherwise perceived as aberrant or irrational.

The problem of the “brain drain”

The migration of human capital from Romania to the developed countries is particularly disturbing in the top areas of science and technology: computer science, computers, atomic physics, etc. Many students, graduates, researchers, and teaching staff in sociology study, train, take master degrees or doctorates, or go as visiting professors to Western countries; but the discipline does not face a “reverse transfer of competence”, which could involve either sociologists who study in Western countries and then stay there to work after graduation or sociologists trained in Romania who migrate to Western countries. There are no significant trends of permanent migration to developed countries nor the “multiplying effect” of specialist migration, which decreases the capacity of the trained staff to form new competence. Most of the sociological community shares a favorable opinion about the circulation of sociologists, considering it an advantage for Romanian society and for individuals.

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Table 1 Overall expenditure for the survey of social structure and relations*, by type of funding (million ROL, current prices)**

Year	Overall expenditure	Of which public funds***	Other resources****
1991		712	
1992		1961	
1993		3365	
1994	1475	1196	279
1995	2241	1970	271
1996	15241	14254	987
1997	30987	25349	5638
1998	42786	39137	3649
1999	16685	10800	5885

* Sociology is included in the chapter Social Structure and Relations, along with other socio-human disciplines: psychology, philosophy, journalism, communication science, political science, and economic science.

** Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook

*** From national research and development programs and from international programs (from the EU, the World Bank, etc.)

**** Economic agents, own income of the units, international sources